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AUTHOR Allison, Stan; And Others
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ABSTRACT

As part of the Michigan Adult Education Inquiry Project III, five adult education practitioners from five metropolitan school districts researched the use of the Cloze procedure in determining the readability of the Michigan High School Proficiency Test for students in alternative or adult education. The Cloze is an assessment designed to take a 275-word passage, and delete every fifth word in the passage until 50 words are deleted. A group of 38 students were tested using the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) 7D Survey Test, Flesch-Kincaid Readability Scale, and the Cloze procedure on two narrative texts from the Michigan High School Proficiency tests. Results showed that the standard Cloze is a valuable procedure to use when assessing level of difficulty of texts for students. It provides an accurate indication of whether students can read and comprehend the assigned material. The survey instrument is appended. (Author/KC)

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USING THE "CLOZE"PROCEDURE TO ASSESS READING MATERIAL FOR ALTERNATIVE/ADULT EDUCATION STUDENTS.

ED 403 422

ABSTRACT

As a part of the Michigan Adult Education Inquiry Project III (MAEPIP), five adult education practitioners from five metropolitan school districts researched the use of the "CLOZE" procedure in identifying readability of the Michigan High School Proficiency Test for students in alternative/adult education. Thirty-eight students in the control group were tested using the TABE 7D -Survey Test, Flesch-Kincaid Readability Scale, and the Cloze procedure on two narrative texts from the Michigan High School Proficiency tests. The purpose of the research was to analyze if the Cloze is a predictable tool for teachers to use when assessing reading material for students and more specifically whether students will be successful on the HSPT test in Reading. The method of gathering the data was to formulate an appropriate cloze, administer the Tabe 7 D Survey, and compare the results to the readability of the HSPT (High School Proficiency Test) using the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Scale.

Michigan Adult Education Practitioner Inquiry Project 1996

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Stan Allison - St. Clair Shores Adult Education
Jo Assink - South Haven Adult Education
Alice Gordon - Kalamazoo Literacy Council
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USING THE "CLOZE" PROCEDURE TO ASSESS READING MATERIAL FOR ALTERNATIVE/ADULT EDUCATION STUDENTS

Stan Allison, Jo Assink, Alice Gordon, Marilyn Johnson, Sandy Pyne

For this study the standard Cloze procedure was used to measure students' readability on two narrative texts to determine whether this is a useful tool when assessing texts or reading materials for students' success.

INQUIRY: Can the use of the Cloze procedure be an accurate and useful tool for classroom teachers to use when assessing reading materials for students?

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in 1996 students in Michigan must pass the Michigan High School Proficiency Test (HSPT) in order to receive a state reading endorsement on their diplomas. To determine if our alternative/adult education students would be able to successfully read the material, a study was conducted using the standard Cloze procedure . The Cloze is an assessment designed to take a 275 word passage, and delete every fifth word in the passage until 50 words are deleted. (See Appendix I) Students are required to read the passage replacing the blanks with the exact words that were used in the original text. Scoring on the Cloze is based on the number of correct words chosen from a total of 50 blanks. The number of correct responses is multiplied by 2 which gives the percentage. If a student scores 10 correct words multiplied by 2 then the percentage is 20%. According to authors Vacca & Vacca in their book Content Area Reading, if a student scored below 40 % on the Cloze test then the material was too difficult and at the frustration level. This would mean that the student would need either a great deal of reading guidance or more suitable reading material to comprehend. If a student scores from 40% to 60% then the material is at the instructional level and the passage can be read with some competence. If the student's score is

above 60% this indicates that the passage can be read with a great deal of competence by students. At this level the material may be too easy and possibly boring.

Another tool we used in our study was the Flesch-Kincaid readability scale (Appendix II). This is a Micro-soft computer program. Readability is based on the average number of syllables per word and the average number of words per sentence. The score in this case indicates a grade/school level. For example, a score of 8.0 means that an eighth grader would understand the document. In the 1996 May issue of the Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy the author, Baines quotes Davison & Green,1988: Rubin, 1984. They state that "much research substantiates the validity of using readability formulas as a general barometer of the difficulty of a text."

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Purpose of this research was two-fold. First, to analyze whether the standard "Cloze" procedure is a predictable tool to assess the level of difficulty on the HSPT reading for alternative/adult education students. Second, to see if there was a correlation between the two scores on the cloze passages in students ability to be successful with the reading material.

In the Spring of 1996, we tested thirty-eight alternative/adult education students from five metropolitan school districts. Using both the TABE 7 D Survey (Appendix III) and the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Scale we set out to assess their reading levels. We then formulated a standard Cloze test on two narrative passages from the Michigan HSPT (High School Proficiency Test) in Reading. Finally, we compared the results.

CURRENT RELATED LITERATURE/METHODS

According to ERIC, a number of research articles have been completed regarding the Cloze procedure. For example, as early as 1976, Rosenkrantz, at the University of Wisconsin, stated in her article The Close Procedure and Adult Basic Education, "the Cloze procedure is an acceptable procedure for matching students to instructional material." In London, England (1984), Vaughan used the Cloze to assess reading skills and how readily adult students could read materials of differing complexity. In

1992, Winser in his article Adult Readers' Problems students with reading problems benefitted from a Cloze activity when discussion followed. In 1993, in a Workplace Literacy Training Center, the Cloze was a useful tool for testing learning gains. Phi Delta Kappa's 1992 article on Achieving Adult Literacy, the author, Farris, stated that the Cloze procedure was an appropriate instructional strategy for the language experience approach. Waring(1995) used reproducible Cloze exercises to help develop independent readers. Finally, the summary cloze technique was used as a good technique to measure reading comprehension according to Courchene, (1995) author or An Alternative Method for Teaching and Testing Reading Comprehension.

METHODS OF DATA-COLLECTION

In order to provide a controlled environment for collecting our data each member of our five member team from school districts of Fennville, Kalamazoo, Portage, St. Clair Shores, and South Haven administered these tests to their social studies classes. Using the TABE Form 7 Survey Level D Test, the standard Cloze test and the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Scale on exact words used in the original passages from the Michigan HSPT in Reading (Appendix IV) and the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Scale, our goal was to determine the level of the passages. Two reading narratives from the High School Proficiency Test - The Bell of Atri (Flesch-Kincaid Readability level-4.2 grade) and You're A Big Baby .....(Flesch-Kincaid Readability level - 7.1 grade) were used with the students. Thirty eight students ranging in ages from 17 -50 with reading grade levels from 2.3 - 11.9 participated in this analysis. Scoring was recorded on standardized sheets.(Appendix IV)

ANALYSIS/IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions based on our research using the standard"CLOZE" procedure in assessing compatibility of reading material to students reading competence demonstrated positive results. We found that due to the fourth grade readability level of The Bell of Atri students did better compared to the readability level of seventh grade for the other passage, You're a Big Baby.....
We concluded that based on the three pieces of data collected, more students were successful on the first passage The Bell of Atri , while

students were less successful on the second reading You're a Big Baby and It's All Because of TV. The results also indicated that when students scored higher on the TABE Test, they generally scored higher on the Cloze and the reverse was true if they did poorly.

RESULTS

Test results (Appendix V) substantiate the fact that the standard Cloze is a valuable procedure to use when assessing level of difficulty of texts for students and it provides a more accurate indication of whether students could read and comprehend the assigned material.

OBSERVATIONS

The members of this research group offered several comments and suggestions as they observed their students. One educator mentioned that when he/she tried to take this standard Cloze, he/she found the passage You're a Big Baby & Its All Because of TV very difficult. Another educator found that the students' attitude and motivation interfered with their performance. "They just filled in the blanks to get it over with."Another teacher mentioned that presenting the "Cloze" "cold"without some explanation as to why or what this test was about bothered their students. Teachers observed that even though these two passages were narratives, they were written in two different styles so the shift from one way of reading differed with the other which impacted their performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One suggestion for teachers in the content areas would be to construct a standard Cloze procedure of classroom reading material to assist in determining whether the compatibility of texts used matches the students' reading level. Another suggestion for teachers is to look at how the language is delivered in the text. Is it too colloquial such as what we found in the passage You're a Big Baby Now and Its All Because of TV. or is it "reader friendly"? One other recommendation in using the Cloze is to prepare students by activating prior knowledge through brain storming, listening to a topical speaker, or practicing other Cloze exercises about the content before teachers administer the "Cloze" assessment. A final recommendation suggests that preparing students for the structure of a narrative or an expository passage will better allow

students to do better.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on our research of Cloze testing, we found it a valuable procedure in assessing whether students can comprehend the material based on the student's reading level and the readability level of the text. Selecting reading material for Alternative/Adult education students is difficult due to the wide range of reading skills. Further research might look at the question, "Does one select materials that are adequate for the lower level readers or the higher level readers?

STAN ALLISON is Social Studies High School Teacher at South Lake High School in St. Clair Shores, MI. and an Adult Education Teacher in Social Studies in St. Clair Shores, MI.

JO ASSINK is a Social Studies & Math Teacher for South Haven Adult Education in South Haven, MI.

ALICE GORDON is a High School Reading Specialist at Loy Norrix High School in Kalamazoo, MI. and an Adult Literacy Tutor for the Literacy Council in Kalamazoo, MI.

MARILYN JOHNSON is an English/Reading Teacher for Fennville Adult Education in Fennville, MI.

SANDY PYNE is a Counselor/ Curriculum Coordinator and Teacher for the Portage Adult and Alternative Education Center in Portage,MI

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APPENDIX I

CLOZE PROCEDURE

How to construct, administer, score, and interpret a cloze test.

1. Construction
   a. Select a reading passage of approximately 275 words from material that students have not yet read, but that you plan to assign.

   b. Leave the first sentence intact. Starting with the second sentence, select at random one of the first five words. Delete every fifth word thereafter, until you have a total of 50 words for deletion. Retain the remaining sentence of the last deleted word. Type one more sentence intact.

   c. Leave an underlined blank of 15 spaces for each deleted word as you type the passage on a ditto master.

2. Administration
   a. Inform students that they are not to use their textbooks or to work together in completing the cloze passage.

   b. Explain the task that students are to perform. Show how the cloze procedure works by providing several examples on the board.

   c. Allow students the time they need to complete the cloze passage.

3. Scoring
   a. Count as correct *every* word students apply. *Do not* count synonyms even though they may appear to be satisfactory. Counting synonyms will not change the scores appreciably, but it will cause unnecessary hassles and haggling with students. Accepting synonyms also affects the reliability of the performance criteria, since they were established on exact word replacements.

   b. Multiply the total number of exact word replacements by 2 in order to determine the student's cloze percentage score.

   c. Record the cloze scores on a sheet of paper for each class. For each class, you now have one to three instructional groups that can form the basis for differentiated assignments. (See Figure II.7.)

4. Interpretation
   a. A score of 60 percent or above indicates that the passage can be read with a great deal of competence by students. They may be able to read the material on their own without reading guidance.

b. A score of 40 to 60 percent indicates that the passage can be read with some competence by students. The material will challenge students if they are given some form of reading guidance.

c. A score below 40 percent indicates that the passage will probably be too difficult for students. They will need either a great deal of reading guidance to benefit from the material or more suitable material.

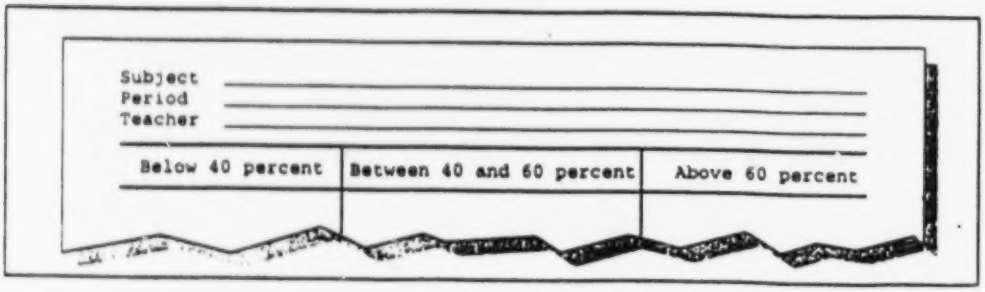

Figure 11.7

Headings for a Cloze Performance Chart

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APPENDIX II

Readability Statistics Dialog Box
From: Micro-soft Works Program
Grammar command (Tools Menu)

Displays the number of words, characters, paragraphs, and sentences; the average number of sentences per paragraph, words per sentence, and characters per word; and other readability indexes for the document.

Dialogue Box Options

Readability

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level

Computes readability based on the average number of syllables per word and the average number of words per sentence. The score in this case indicates a grade-school level. For example, a score of 8.0 means that an eighth grader would understand the document. Standard writing approximately equates to the seventh-to-eighth-grade level.

Tests of Adult Basic Education

TABE™

Forms 7 and 8

Survey

Level D

APPENDIX III

EXAMINER

SCHOOL OR PROGRAM

TEST DATE

MONTH DAY YEAR

FEMALE

MALE

I.D. NUMBER

TEST FORM

7

DIRECTIONS

1. Do *not* tear the perforated strip off the edge of the answer sheet.
2. Fill in all information at the top of this answer sheet.
3. Mark all answers on this answer sheet. For each item, fill in the space that goes with the answer you choose. Fill in the space completely, and make your mark heavy and dark.
4. Do *not* erase on this answer sheet. If you make a mistake, or if you wish to change an answer, cross out your first answer with an X and mark the correct answer space. If you change an answer and then decide that your first answer was correct, cross out the second answer also, and circle the first answer.

Test 1 Reading

A	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	3	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	7	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	11	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	15	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	19	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	23	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
B	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	4	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	8	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	12	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	16	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	20	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	24	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ
1	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	5	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	9	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	13	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	17	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	21	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	25	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
2	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	6	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	10	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	14	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	18	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	22	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ					

Test 2 Mathematics Computation

A	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	4	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	Ⓚ	8	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	Ⓚ	12	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	Ⓚ	
1	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	5	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	9	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	13	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	
2	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	Ⓚ	6	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	Ⓚ	10	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	Ⓚ	14	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	Ⓚ	
3	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	7	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	11	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	15	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	

Test 3 Applied Mathematics

A	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	4	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	8	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	12	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	16	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	20	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	24	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ
1	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	5	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	9	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	13	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	17	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	21	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	25	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
2	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	6	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	10	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	14	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	18	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	22	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ					
3	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	7	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	11	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	15	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	19	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	23	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ					

Test 4 Language

A	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	1	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	6	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	11	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	16	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	21	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ					
B	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	2	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	7	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	12	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	17	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	22	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ					
C	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	3	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	8	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	13	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	18	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	23	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ					
D	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	4	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	9	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	14	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	19	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	24	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ					
					5	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	10	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	15	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	20	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	25	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ					

Test 5 Spelling

A	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	3	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	6	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	9	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	12	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	15	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	18	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ
1	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	4	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	7	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	10	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	13	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	16	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	19	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ
2	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	5	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	8	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	11	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	14	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ	17	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	20	Ⓕ	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓙ

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SCORE??

APPENDIX IV

TEST RESULTS

Name of student	TABE D Reading level	Cloze: The Bell of Atri (Readability-)	Cloze:You're A Big... (Readability-)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			

Write your comments- Describe your population - What results did you get.

Purpose of Testing: To find out the reading level of my students (as based on the TABE Survey D test) compared to the reading level of the materials (as based on the Flesch-Kincaid readability scale): and to see if they could comprehend the material Reading Proficiency (as based on the Cloze Procedures)

APPENDIX V

Test Results

Age	TABE	Bell of Atri Readability Level (4.2)	You're A Big Baby..... Readability Level (7.I)
#1- 23	6.2	32%	30%
#2- 17	6.2	66%	30%
#3- 16	7.7	58%	16%
#4- 23	8.5	28%	0%
#8- 18	7.7	66%	10%
#9- 17	0.7	54%	3%
#10-18	7.7	56%	40%
#11-19	8.6	48%	16%
#12-50	5.4	46%	2%
#13-35	6.8	36%	2%
#14-21	10.2	78%	42%
#15-17	6.8	52%	36%
#16-20	11.0	56%	0%
#17-21	12.9	56%	44%
#18-23	12.6	62%	54%
#19-21	10.2	50%	24%
#20-20	10.2	66%	54%
#21-26	12.6	72%	40%
#22-17	5.8	50%	32%
#23-18	4.9	38%	8%
#24-16	5.4	20%	20%
#25-16	5.4	52%	14%
#26-17	8.5	48%	28%
#27-18	12.9	64%	40%
#28-18	8.5	26%	22%
#29-17	10.2	62%	28%
#30-18	12.9	66%	32%
#31-17	11.0	70%	16%
#32-16	10.2	42%	16%
#33-18	12.6	50%	12%
#34-18	9.2	52%	42%
#35-16	5.8	58%	35%
#36-16	6.8	54%	22%
#37-17	9.2	46%	40%
#38-32	8.0	18%	10%